



State of Connecticut
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EDUCATION COMMITTEE
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TESTIMONY OF
REPRESENTATIVE SANDY NAFIS, 27TH DISTRICT OF NEWINGTON
AND SENATOR PAUL DOYLE, 9TH DISTRICT

In Support of HB 5978 – Permanent Absentee Ballot Status for Disabled Voters

Public Hearing, February 14, 2011

We wish to thank the co-chairs of the Government Administrations and Elections Committee for holding a public hearing on this bill. We are grateful also to the Secretary of the State for supporting this bill.

A constituent requested legislation that would require absentee ballots to be automatically mailed to voters who have permanent disabilities. She told us she must complete a separate application for each election, primary and referendum in order to receive an absentee ballot. She wrote that she considers this situation to be a form of discrimination since people who are able to go to the polls don't have to fill out or sign anything every time they want to vote. She is permanently disabled, and therefore will always require an absentee ballot.

We agreed with her that having to apply for an absentee ballot for every election seems to present an added hardship for someone who is going to require the absentee option for all future elections. It is reasonable and just that an automatic mailing system for absentee ballots be established for permanently disabled voters. Therefore we propose to remove the obstacles from the procedures surrounding absentee voting for those who are permanently disabled.

This year, we offer this testimony in support of HB 5978. This legislation would eliminate the need for the permanently disabled to make multiple trips to their town hall to request forms for each election, sometimes more than one election in a year, and thus allow them to take part comfortably in a most important civic privilege and responsibility.

We greatly appreciate your consideration, and we are willing to work with you to pass this bill. Please contact me or Senator Doyle with any questions or concerns.